



A M E R I C A N
ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Proceeding 18-336
Implementation of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018

Dear Ms. Dortch,

On behalf of the American Association of Suicidology (AAS), I am writing to urge you to designate a 3-digit telephone number for the purpose of mental health and suicide crisis and intervention across the nation. AAS' mission is to promote the understanding and prevention of suicide and support those who have been affected by it.

The United States is currently experiencing a suicide crisis with historical increases in rates over the last 10 years with suicide being the 2nd leading cause of death in 10 to 34-year-olds. With the CDC reporting that 47,173 people in the United States died by suicide in 2017, we can see how we must take action now to change this course and this designated number would be instrumental.

The recommendation of the National American Number Council to expand the current 211 number to include mental health crisis and suicide prevention is a stance that AAS strongly disagrees with. The purpose of 211 is to provide social service resources, not crisis intervention nor suicide prevention. In order for individuals and their families to receive the care they need, an dedicated 3-digit crisis number must be created for this purpose..

Throughout our country, crisis centers are understaffed, underfunded, and overworked. When the unique, 3-digit crisis number is created, we must work to ensure these centers are adequately funded to ensure they can meet the call volume that may accompany this new 3-digit number, as well as the services they provide currently. For this reason, AAS strongly encourages lawmakers to include provisions for appropriate financial resources to fund this suicide prevention-specific service at scale.

Very Respectfully,

Colleen Creighton
Executive Director